

## The witching hour: 3 caffeine-free ways to beat an afternoon energy slump.



For colicky newborns, early evening is known as the witching hour. For adults, it's mid-afternoon that often spells trouble, though usually not the inconsolable-crying variety. You can be cruising along at work or running errands, and all of a sudden, everything seems to slow down. Your senses get fuzzy, your ability to focus gets foggy, and you feel sleeeeeepy. The mid-afternoon slump is at hand. Rather than reaching for a cup of coffee or caffeinated soft drink, try a few strategies that are more effective and won't give you the jitters. Head for the stairwell if you can — not to escape the office, but to get your blood pumping. A recent study found that walking up and down stairs for 10 minutes gave people more energy than did drinking a caffeinated soda. (A speedy walk outside would likely have a similar effect.) Another option, if circumstances allow, is to follow your body's directive and sleep —

albeit briefly. A short nap (5 to 15 minutes) can restore alertness without leading to grogginess. And from the “ounce of prevention” department: Avoid sugar, white flour, and other carbohydrates that have been stripped of nutrients and fiber, which set you up for an energy rollercoaster. Instead make sure your breakfast and lunch contain good sources of protein (like salmon and ocean trout, egg whites, or nuts) and whole-food carbs (like veggies, beans, or whole grains). Your new motto for the afternoon: Steady as she goes!